

I support media diversity

I write to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

The FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules and restore the Fairness Doctrine. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

The proposed FCC decision to allow greater media concentration in local and national markets is a violation of the public trust. Such media concentration impoverishes our already threatened democracy. It limits - if not altogether quashes - debate and prevent healthy dissent. In other words, such a decision is fundamentally anti-democratic. It would replace the marketplace of ideas with the dictates of corporate oligarchs.

We have already seen the results of the 1996 changes: political debate reduced to soundbites and limited coverage of real issues or minority candidates. Further concentration would only erode what little debate remains. It also has a stultifying effect on culture when the papers or radio cover only a narrow range of arts and music. Where I live, media concentration of radio has resulted in airwaves playing the same music on many different channels and failure to cover important news issues. Indeed, at present, environmental and social justice issues are no longer covered by many television and radio stations.

Such concentration would also allow foreigners, like Rupert Murdoch, to set national policy and debate, if any such would still exist.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding. Indeed, the Fairness Doctrine should be restored to restore some of the diversity of views which have already been lost.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

I urge you to reconsider what is being reported as a predetermined decision. Prove to the American people you have sworn to serve that the process and the decision are fair and well considered and not the product of back door collusion.

Respectfully,

Cynthia M. Hogan, J.D.

